

Water Agency

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Contra Costa County



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Mr. Phil Isenberg, Chair
Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

August 15, 2008

Subject: Levees; Response to Task Force in advance of your August 21, 2008 discussion

Dear Chair Isenberg and Members of the Blue Ribbon Task Force:

The subject of levees; their repair, restructuring, permitting, obtaining construction materials and funding advocacy are subjects about which Contra Costa County is very familiar. The County has considered levee repair/ rehabilitation a priority, not just for the benefit of our residents, but to much of the state of California for water supply, and for preservation of the Delta ecosystem.

We recognize and appreciate the efforts of the Blue Ribbon Task Force in addressing ecosystem and water supply as co-equal goals, and to recognize the Delta as a Place. What is also important to note is that levees are an absolutely central component of these important goals, and will continue to be for the foreseeable future. This will continue to be the case regardless of which decisions are made on the final configuration of the Delta landform, and regardless of which conveyance scenarios are finally selected and implemented. The discussions and reports as to which levees should or should not be repaired are discussions for the future, once water supply and ecosystem decisions have been made and are largely underway. We estimate this may take a decade at least. Should a multi-levee break occur before then, all of the planning for ecosystem, Delta as a Place, and much of the planning for water supply may be wasted.

As to how repair should occur, we think the Task Force is on the right track in establishing different levels of protection for (and therefore different levels of funding toward) different land uses. We also endorse the concept of beneficiary pays. Additional County policies are as follows;

- Advocate for significant funding for western and central Delta (infrastructure protection) levees, individually and in collaboration with others (beneficiaries also pay).
- Support immediate rehabilitation of priority levees on the western and central Delta islands.
- Support funding assistance for small urban communities within the Delta to attain 200-year levee standards.
- Support using PL-84-99 as a minimum design standard for levees.
- Support stockpiling rock in the Delta (and specifically in the western Delta) for levee repair.
- Support a multi-year funding commitment to restore non-project levees and levees outside the State Plan of Flood Control.

- Support and advocate for the Delta Long Term Management Strategy (LTMS) and the beneficial reuse of dredged materials for levee rehabilitation.

In furtherance of the above policies, the County, the Contra Costa Council, Contra Costa Water District, EBMUD and western and central Delta Reclamation Districts have formed the Delta Levee Coalition to advocate for funding for non-project levees in the western and central Delta. Attached is the Coalition's chart of specific projects and costs (specific project cost updates for some projects are underway but not yet available).

Contra Costa County initiated (and continues to collaborate with and advocate funding for) the Delta Long Term Management Strategy (LTMS). The Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) is lead in working with all of the state and federal agencies on permit streamlining and a sediment management plan for the Delta, including reuse of dredged materials for levee rehabilitation. Recognition and endorsement of the LTMS process in the Strategic Plan is important, as is funding support.

The County has worked with the state and federal agencies and our legislators in successfully placing a potential state-federal collaborative project, a re-handling site for dredged materials on Sherman Island in the 2007 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). This is another important potential avenue to obtain federal funding for Delta projects, and should be considered for inclusion in the Strategic Plan.

Finally, the County was instrumental in the initiation of the CALFED Levee Stability Improvement Program (LSIP). When the federal CALFED Reauthorization Act was passed in 2004 through the work of Senator Feinstein, \$90 million in initial funding was authorized, but could not be appropriated until a report was prepared by the ACOE. Funding for the report was not included and the project languished until the County advocated for and through our congressional legislative delegation was successful in obtaining \$500,000 for the ACOE initial work on this project. At this time, because of the uncertain status of CALFED, it has been difficult to maintain federal interest in this program. This program is an important federal pipeline of funds into the Delta, and with state interest and advocacy, could become even more valuable.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments; those of us at Contra Costa County look forward to working with you further on this very important issue. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (925) 335-1226, or rgoul@cd.cccounty.us.

Sincerely,



Roberta Goulart
Executive Officer
Contra Costa County Water Agency

THE DELTA LEVEE COALITION

The Delta Levee Coalition is comprised of Contra Costa County, the Contra Costa Council, East Bay Municipal Utility District, Contra Costa Water District and the reclamation districts for the eight western and central Delta islands, with support from the Delta Protection Commission.

The purpose of the Delta Levee Coalition is to advocate for adequate funds from Propositions 84 and 1E to repair the fragile levees in the western and central Delta. These levees are critical to maintaining public health and safety, the environmental health of the estuary, drinking water supply quality, infrastructure and the numerous natural and economic assets in the Delta. One of the funding categories identified in Proposition 1E is “reducing the risk of levee failure in the delta.”

We request that the State of California commit now to the allocation of up to \$500 million over the next five years from Propositions 84 and 1E to fund the levee repair projects identified in the attached chart. The attached projects represent the “no regrets” type of investments which can be implemented today, and will continue to command priority in any future “sustainable delta” scenario.

The Delta is home to more than 500,000 people, habitat to 700 native species, has multiple highways, pipelines, utility distribution systems, railroads and deep water ports. It supplies water to more than 25 million Californians, agriculture and businesses and supports a significant recreation industry and fisheries. Its water supply and other Delta services support a \$400 billion state economy.

The eight western Delta islands are the “gatekeepers” to these critical public services. Failure of these levees, from earthquake or flooding, would cause massive disruption to these services. The Department of Water Resources has identified the levees as critical to controlling salinity in the Delta, protecting water quality to water users in the state. The central Delta levees are also critical to the region because they protect agriculture, water supply, highway, railroad and energy transmission infrastructure essential to the economic well being of the region.

The state’s Delta Vision process will take close to two years to determine solutions to the challenges in the Delta and multiple years thereafter to implement those solutions. In the meantime, it is imperative to repair this critical infrastructure today, to protect against catastrophic events prior to identification and implementation of the sustainable Delta plan.

Delta Levee Coalition
List of priority projects for use of Proposition 1E and Proposition 84 Funds
(Levees outside the State Plan of Flood Control)

Project Description	Cost				Local Cost Share		Project Readiness	Local & Regional Benefits
Hotchkiss Tract: Rec. Dist. 799	HMP	PL84-99	FEMA Cert.	Other	Req.	Available		
Remove deep pipes along 3.9 miles of existing urbanized levee. Improvement of a 3.9 mile section of levee in an existing urbanized area. Project consists of removing deep and abandoned piles, and installing sheet pile. (Meets HMP standard)	\$200,000 plus per year; \$10 Million				25% required by Special Projects	A special assessment of \$5,000 plus per year, other budget funds available.	Conceptual plan & engineering done in 2004. Project is ready for design specs and bidding. Work can be done under maintenance permits. Project can be phased.	Hotchkiss is one of the Eight Western Delta Islands that DWR has identified as critical to control of salinity in the Delta, protecting water quality to all water users in the state. The levee system protects existing urbanization including homes, businesses, agriculture, and recreational access. The levee also protects identified wetlands.
Sheet pile along 3.9 miles of existing urbanized levee.	\$1 Million plus per year; \$30 Million total. Increases seismic resistance of levee.				25% required by Special Projects	A special assessment of \$5,000 plus per year, other budget funds available.	Conceptual plan & engineering done in 2004. Project is ready for design specs and bidding. Work can be done under maintenance permits. Project can be phased.	Hotchkiss is one of the Eight Western Delta Islands that DWR has identified as critical to control of salinity in the Delta, protecting water quality to all water users in the state. The levee system protects existing urbanization including homes, businesses, agriculture, and recreational access. The levee also protects identified wetlands.

Project Description	Cost				Local Cost Share		Project Readiness	Local & Regional Benefits
Holland Tract: Rec Dist. 2025	HMP	PL84-99	FEMA Cert.	Other	Req.	Available		
Placement of fill material on 10.9 miles of levees, on the landside slope and levee crown to achieve the PL-99 cross section standard, minimizing or eliminating subsidence and reducing future O&M costs.		\$1 Million				Yes, Varies 7-25%	<p>Conceptual planning and engineering was done in 2006. Project is ready for detail design specs and bid documents. Work can be done under existing routine maintenance permits.</p>	<p>Holland tract is one of the Eight Western Delta Islands that DWR has identified as critical to control of salinity in the Delta, protecting water quality to all water users in the state.</p> <p>Potential to plant the new levee berm with native vegetation to create upland habitat.</p> <p>Reducing flood risk; Holland Tract is located along Old River and Rock Slough, main conveyance channels for the Contra Costa Water District, the State Water Project and the Central Valley project.</p>

Project Description	Cost				Local Cost Share		Project Readiness	Local & Regional Benefits
Holland Tract: Rec Dist. 2025	HMP	PL84-99	FEMA Cert.	Other	Req.	Available		
<p>Bank Protection Project</p> <p>Placement of riprap on the waterside slope (from the existing top of rock to the PL-99 elevation) to reduce flood risk due to erosion.</p> <p>In critical reaches, a splash cap would be constructed to prevent damage from wind-driven waves.</p>		\$1.8 Million				Yes, Varies 7-25%	<p>Conceptual planning and engineering was done in 2006. Project is ready for detail design specs and bid documents. Work can be done under existing routine maintenance permits.</p>	<p>Holland tract is one of the Eight Western Delta Islands that DWR has identified as critical to control of salinity in the Delta, protecting water quality to all water users in the state.</p> <p>Potential to plant tules at base of waterside slope for habitat enhancement. Tules would also aid in dissipating wave energy, reducing flood risk.</p> <p>Reducing flood risk; Holland Tract is located along Old River and Rock Slough, main conveyance channels for the Contra Costa Water District, the State Water Project and the Central Valley project.</p>

Project Description	Cost				Local Cost Share		Project Readiness	Local & Regional Benefits
Webb Tract: Rec. District 2026	HMP	PL84-99	FEMA Cert.	Other				
Rehabilitation - 12.8 miles of levees to PL-99 standard. Placement of fill material in landside slope and levee crown along critical levee reaches to reduce flood risk, minimizing subsidence (and thereby decreasing future O&M costs),		\$10 Million				Yes, Varies 0 to 25%	Conceptual planning and engineering was done in 2006. Project is ready for detail design specs and bid documents. Work can be done under existing routine maintenance permits.	Webb Tract is one of the Eight Western Delta Islands that DWR has identified as critical to control of salinity in the Delta, protecting water quality to all water users in the state.
Project Description	Cost				Local Cost Share		Project Readiness	Local & Regional Benefits
Webb Tract: Rec. District 2026 Webb Tract Bank Protection Project	HMP	PL84-99	FEMA Cert.	Other	Req.	Available		
Placement of riprap on waterside slope to protect against erosion from wind and wave forces (particularly levees along the San Joaquin River and Franks Tract where fetch waves are of greatest concern).	\$1 Million					Yes, Varies 0 to 25%	Conceptual planning and engineering was done in 2006. Project is ready for detail design specs and bid documents. Work can be done under existing routine maintenance permits.	Webb Tract is one of the Eight Western Delta Islands that DWR has identified as critical to control of salinity in the Delta, protecting water quality to all water users in the state.

Project Description	Cost				Local Cost Share		Project Readiness	Local & Regional Benefits
Webb Tract: Rec. Dist 2026 Shallow Water Habitat Project	HMP	PL84-99	FEMA Cert.	Other	Req.	Available		
Conversion of existing low value aquatic habitat to higher value shallow water aquatic habitat. This will also stabilize levee system by supporting the waterside toe of the levee.				\$6 Million		Yes, Varies 0 - 25%	Conceptual planning and engineering not complete. Project will require environmental documentation and permitting. Construction can begin in 18 to 24 months.	Webb Tract is one of the Eight Western Delta Islands that DWR has identified as critical to control of salinity in the Delta, protecting water quality to all water users in the state. Opportunity for environmental enhancement coupled with reducing flood risk. Ten acres of shallow water habitat created to benefit limited species in the Delta.

Project Description	Cost				Local Cost Share		Project Readiness	Local & Regional Benefits
Veale Tract: Rec, Dist 2065	HMP	PL84-99	FEMA Cert.	Other	Req.	Available		
<p>Levee Rehabilitation and Biotechnical Bank Stabilization Project</p> <p>Design and construction of improvements to rehabilitate all 5.7 miles of levee to PL-99 standards (estimated \$1.7 million) Waterside rehabilitation (\$2 million)</p>		\$3.7 Million						This project also protects lands to the west of the reclamation district
Project Description	Cost				Local Cost Share		Project Readiness	Local & Regional Benefits
Contra Costa Canal Replacement	HMP	PL84-99	FEMA Cert.	Other	Req.	Available		
<p>Replace approximately 7,000 LF of the Contra Costa Canal as Phase 2 of the Canal Replacement Project. Phase 2 would install a buried 10-foot diameter pipeline within the existing USBR right-of-way between Marsh Creek (the end of Phase 1) and Cypress Road.</p>				\$24.5 Million	\$12.3 Million	\$12.3 Million	<p>CEQA is complete. Other permits will be secured by July 2007. Phase 1 will begin construction in Fall 2007. Phase 2 of the project could be awarded during the summer of 2007 (together with Phase 1) if funding was secured.</p>	<p>The project would provide flood control, fishery, and water quality benefits. The Phase 2 pipeline would also significantly reduce state liability associated with the future state-owned Dutch Slough Tidal Restoration Project. The restoration project would inundate wetlands near the open canal and increase seawater intrusion into CCWD's water supply unless the canal is replaced with a pipeline.</p>

Project Description	Cost				Local Cost Share		Project Readiness	Local & Regional Benefits
Bethel Island: Bethel Island Municipal Improvement District	HMP	PL84-99	FEMA Cert.	Other	Req.	Available		
Upgrading of 11.5 miles of levee. About 8.3 miles would be improved by driving steel sheet piles; remaining 3.2 miles upgrades with soil and cutoffs.			\$150 Million			\$2 Million	Project ready to go; prelim studies and analysis completed	Bethel Island is one of the 8 western delta islands, that DWR has identified as critical to control of salinity in the delta, protecting water quality to all users in the state. Bethel Island is also one of the few urbanized areas, so levee rehabilitation activities will protect lives and property as well.
Project Description	Cost				Local Cost Share		Project Readiness	Local & Regional Benefits
EBMUD: Mokelumne Aqueduct	HMP	PL84-99	FEMA Cert.	Other	Req.	Available		
Lower Roberts Island Rec Dist.#684	Meet HMP	\$1.45 Million 13.7 Miles						Protects agriculture, Town of Holt, Mokelumne Aqueducts, Highway 4, BNSF Railroad, Kinder-Morgan and PG&E pipelines
Lower Jones Tract, Reclamation District 2038	Meet HMP	\$8.65 Million 9 Miles				\$300,000 '07 - '08	Ready-waiting permits for 300K of work	Protects agriculture, Town of Holt, Mokelumne Aqueducts, Highway 4, BNSF Railroad, Kinder-Morgan and PG&E pipelines
Upper Jones Tract, Reclamation District 2039	Meet HMP	\$3.7 Million 4.9 Miles				\$300,000 '07 - '08	Ready-waiting permits for 300K of work	Protects Agriculture, Mokelumne Aqueducts, Highway 4, BNSF Railroad, Kinder-Morgan and PG&E pipelines.
Woodward Island Reclamation District 2072	Meet HMP	\$13.7 Million 8.9 Miles				\$250,000 '07 - '08	Ready-waiting permits for 250K of work	Protects Agriculture, Mokelumne Aqueducts, BNSF Railroad, Kinder-Morgan, PG&E pipelines, Orwood-Palm and Discovery Bay. If Woodward Island floods ground water levels at Discovery Bay (RD 0800 – Byron Tract) will be elevated to near the surface.

Project Description	Cost				Local Cost Share		Project Readiness	Local & Regional Benefits
EBMUD: Mokelumne Aqueduct Cont.	HMP	PL84-99	FEMA Cert.	Other	Req.	Available		
Orwood Tract Reclamation District 2024	Meet HMP	\$1.6 Million 6.4 Miles				\$125,000 '07 - '08	Ready-waiting on permits for \$125K of work	Protects Agriculture, Mokelumne Aqueducts, BNSF Railroad, Kinder-Morgan, PG&E, Transmission Agency of Northern Calif., East Bay Regional Park District, Discovery Bay and Lakes Subdivisions (Upper Orwood) from elevated ground water.
Palm Tract Reclamation District 2024	Meet HMP	\$12.3 Million 7.5 Miles				\$125,000 '07 - '08	Ready-waiting permits for \$125K of work	Protects Agriculture, Mokelumne Aqueducts, BNSF Railroad, Kinder-Morgan, PG&E, Transmission Agency of Northern Calif., East Bay Regional Park District, Discovery Bay and Lakes Subdivisions (Upper Orwood) from elevated ground water.
Project Description	Cost				Local Cost Share		Project Readiness	Local & Regional Benefits
Jersey Island: Rec. Dist. #830	HMP	PL84-99	FEMA Cert.	Other	Req.	Available		
12 miles of levee rehabilitation to increase both crest elevation and geometric width to an elevation of 2 feet above 100-year flood crest covered with all weather surface; rip to protect from wind and ship-generated waves; rock splash cap. Rehabilitate levees on Jersey Island from Station 475+00 to 590+00	HMP plus a one foot over-build to accommodate settlement. \$4 Million				\$50,000	\$50,000	Topographic mapping complete, engineering 90% complete	Jersey Island is one of the Eight Western Delta Islands that DWR has identified as critical to control of salinity in the Delta, protecting water quality to all water users in the state. Jersey Island is the 2nd most western Delta island. Provides vehicular access to Bradford and Webb via the Delta Ferry Authority. Has 42" high pressure PG&E gas line easement. Has 500 kv WAPA transmission line easement. Has 500 kv PG&E transmission line easement. Protects Bethel Island, Webb, Bradford Hotchkiss and Dutch Slough from high waves and wind.

Project Description	Cost				Local Cost Share		Project Readiness	Local & Regional Benefits
Jersey Island: Rec. Dist. #830 Cont.	HMP	PL84-99	FEMA Cert.	Other	Req.	Available		
Rehabilitate levees on Jersey Island from Station 590+-- to 819+00 and)+00 to 110+00	\$13 Million				\$50,000	\$50,000	Work dependent upon funding	
Rehabilitate levees on Jersey Island from Station 335+00 to 475+00	\$6 Million				\$50,000	\$50,000	Topographic mapping complete, additional work dependent upon funding	
Waterside Erosion Protections	\$5 Million				\$50,000	\$50,000	Work dependent upon funding	
Project Description	Cost				Local Cost Share		Project Readiness	Local & Regional Benefits
Bradford Island: Rec Dist. #2059	HMP	PL84-99	FEMA Cert.	Other	Req.	Available		
Rehabilitate 3.5 miles of levee	\$4 Million	HMP plus \$1 Million					Topographic base maps and engineering complete. Plans and specs remain to be completed. Work ready to proceed pending funding	Bradford Island is one of the 8 western delta islands, that DWR has identified as critical to control of salinity in the delta, protecting water quality for all users in the state.

Project Description	Cost				Local Cost Share		Project Readiness	Local & Regional Benefits	
Bradford Island: Rec Dist. #2059 Cont.	HMP	PL84-99	FEMA Cert.	Other	Req.	Available			
Waterside erosion protection	\$5 Million						Bathymetric survey is complete. Work ready to proceed to construction pending funding	Levee rehabilitation would protect existing infrastructure, existing farmland & residences, and protect water quality.	
Subtotal	\$78 Million	\$58.9 Million	\$150 Million	\$30.5 Million					
TOTAL	\$317.4 Million								
									4/16/2007